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1979
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UCT
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Preamble:

The cool, and apparently dispassionate analysis of a phenomenon like Black Consciousness can not forget, that hundred have died for it, thousands were injured, thousands went to jail for it, many are still languishing in jails or under severe banning orders, and hundreds of thousands were so serious about it that in going onto the streets to proclaim it they too risked their livelyhood, their freedom, their limbs and their life for it. The uprisings of 1976 and 1977 have become part of that ongoing liberation struggle, which started with the resistance of the !Ke, the Khoi-Khoin and the Bantu tribes in the moment the first white conquerors set foot on the South African Subcontinent and will end only when the subcontinent has been freed from all forms of oppression. It is all too easy, from the hindsight of the intellectual's study, to condemn the weaknesses, confusions and dangers of a movement like Black Consciousness. Nor do those fare much better, who armed with a more rational vision of the path of the liberation struggle, failed to give the clear signals which would have signposted alternative roads for the masses to take. The defeats, the deaths, the maiming and destruction are clearly the responsibility of the oppressive regime of South Africa; but some of the responsibility must be shouldered not only by those who advocated the ideology but also by those who understood its weaknesses but did not criticise it more consistently and openly. I do not except myself from the blame of having not offered clear and viable alternatives, while I could have done so. Without such a personal admission of being caught in the web ideological confusion in a country where the clarity of open debate is nearly impossible and in the inactivity of an insufficient praxis, a critique of Black Consciousness would be nothing but the thoughtless cruelty of a man safely behind his writing desk, while the masses, however confused - through no fault of their own -

are attempting to change the direction of history.

On the other hand, while a critique of Black Consciousness must acknowledge the personal contribution of all those who suffered for it, - out of a burning concern for all the victims of the Soweto uprisings and for the possible future victims of the apartheid state, it must at the same time attempt to lay bare all the weaknesses and faults of its ideaological structure: only an unsparing analysis of these will prevent us from repeating the mistakes of the past. And that, after all, is what the study of history is about.

Ambiguities of Black Consciousness

Barney Pityana, President of SASO in 1972, stated once: "I believe that a classless society will be created more easily among Blacks. There must be higher values to which all blacks aspire." Despite the acknowledgement that the South African situation could be seen as "basically" a class struggle, and that the creation of a classless society is the goal of such a struggle, Pityana rejects the "lower classes of Whites" as "part and parcel of the system" who "will support any policies that offer the maximum security" for them. While he is undoubtedly right about the present attitude of the white labour aristocracy, part of which is, while I write this, striking for the continued application of job reservation on the mines, his belief that <u>all</u> blacks aspire to higher values has already been proved wrong in most of the independent black states, where it has been shown that black faces can exploit as efficiently and as brutally as white faces. Terminology, once set into motion, has a logic of its own, and there is little comfort in Pityana's assurance that the ideology of Black Consciousness "will be used merely to rally people round a cause", and that the Black, who is a capitalist, is not part of the people. The ambiguity of the central term, "Black", defined on the one hand by the fact that it describes all those who are subjected to discriminatory legislation, on the other hand suggestion a common bond of all those

who have been born with a certain skin pigmentation, lends itself to the same kind of dexterous misuse, as the traditional nationalist labels of Germans, Spaniards, Italians, Portuguese or Afrikaners. The danger of the ambiguity of the term "Black" is in no way lessened by the fact that the appeal is made to the "Blacks" as an oppressed group; while it is true that "Blacks" are an "historically, politically, socially and economically disinherited and dispossessed group", as one of the leaders of SASO formulated it, the terminology of Black Consciousness makes it difficult to draw clear lines to exclude those who benefit from the present system as collaborators of the apartheid structure or as exploiters of the masses, even if they suffer to some extent under the same racialist laws as the masses of South Africa. In a similar vein the German people conceived themselves to be oppressed and exploited after the treaty of Versailles by such real and imaginary opponents as International Capitalism, Jewish Financial Capital and, interestingly enough, at the same time by World Communism. Posing as oppressed and exploited themselves, German Capitalists financed nationalist movements and finally Hitler's National Socialist Workers Party of Germany. The confusing use of the word "German" and the emphasis on a nationalist rather than a socialist terminology, made it possible for people like Krupp and Thyssen to support and be members of a "Workers Party". It is not my aim to prove that Black Consciousness and the various organisations subscribing to this ideology were faschist; but there are some disturbing structural analogies, which suggest that the ideology of Black Consciousness could be exploited by aspirant black capitalists and political charlatans for the purpose of merely replacing the present white power and economic elite by a black elite, which would be equally oppressive and exploitative, and would thus eventually be forced to use dictatorial powers and oppressive measures similar to those used by faschist and faschistoid states the world over.

Like National-Socialism until its sucessful take-over of power in 1933 and the Röhm putch in 1934, when it eliminated its militant

"socialist" wing, Black Consciousness as an ideology of the oppressed in South Africa does contain certain elements of what could be termed "African Socialism", while the movement did try to mobilise the masses of the "black" workers in political strikes, and while it did take up some of the immediate concerns of the masses both politically and economically, it was still a movement of the educated elite in universities and schools, and it did attract the support of a considerable portion of the petit-bourgeoisie and the bourgeoisie of the disenfranchsd; the most disquieting feature of Black Consciousness is, however, that with only a slight shift in emphasis it could be claimed by some of the collarobrators of the apartheid system as an ideology to beautify their own political creed with some notable success.

As an ideology which does not address itself to the urban and rural proletariat, but to blacks in general, which therefore cannot afford to alienate those portions of the disenfranchised which are either seeing themselves as deprived peasants (even if they earn some or most of their livelyhood as migrant labourers within the capitalist economy) or as aspirant members of a black bourgeoisie of petit-bourgeoisie, Black Consciousness movements cannot take a clear stand on economic issues. To hold out hope to the working masses that their legitimate demands will be safeguarded in a future liberated South Africa and simultaneously to assure the shopkeepers and industrialists that there will be "land allocated for private agriculture, commerce and industry", that "privately owned industry and commercial undertakings will be allowed to operate" (even if "without state assistance and within the framework drawn up by the State department responsible for commerce, industry and trade"), that there will be "privately owned import houses" and that there will be privately owned mass media, as the Black Communalism programm does, is an attempt to hoodwink the masses into believing, that capitalism tempered by state interference is an adequate solution for their problems. This program, accepted by the Black Peoples Convention in Mafeking on May 30 and 31, 1976, apart ffom a few pious references to the "traditional

African economic lifestyle" and without spelling out how this tradional lifestyle can be adapted to the demands of a "highly industriàaised and modern economy", curiously resembles in its strange mixture of state-owned and privatelyowned economy the present set-up, dreamed up and put into practice by the Broederbond, with the sole difference that the benificiaries of the system now are the "Afrikaners" and then will be "Blacks". Particularily the following provisions of the Black Communalism program are already implemented, and need little else but the transfer from a white to a black burocracy and managerial class:

2. ... forestry shall be owned by the State

9. It shall be the duty of the state to assist such villages and co-operatives in marketing their agricultural products for both internal and external consumption.

11. Industries whose products are of stratègic importance to the nation shall be owned by the state e.g. manufacture of arms and armaments.

16. Salaries paid by employers to their employees in private industry and commerde as well as in co-operative, community and State-owned enterprises shall be carefully supervised by the State to lay specific minimums for specific categories of undertakings.

17. In all cases the State shall specifically protect the interests of workers against exploitation and unsatisfactory working conditions. (sc. simply replace "workers" by "white workers" to arrive at the present situation, e.g. job reservation etc.)

18. Trade unions comprising the workers within a certain crafts shall be encouraged and recognised and shall enjoy a particularly privileged relationship with the department controlling labour.

19. Wages and salaries shall be periodically reviewed by a special tribunal consistingof representatives of trade unions

25. The state through its department controlling commerce and industry shall at all times restrict importation of goods only to those categories and levels that are essential for complete existence and shall encourage local productions of goods which can be sustained from natural resources and industry within the country.

27. The State shall control the marketing of locally originating produce and goods intended both for the internal and external marketings...

29. ...provided that all railway, harbour and airway transportation shall be completely owned by the State.

30. "...all radio and television stations will be owned either wholly or jointly by either the State or the communities, and providdd that all postal and telegraphic services shall be in the hands of the State.

Most of the remaining provisions, where they do not provide for private ownership of the means of productions, refer to the land-question, in such a way that they would enable a Black government through the means of the state-ownership of land to redistribute the 87% of the land now held by "whites" to "blacks" on the basis of either "family-units" or "co-operatives"; these provisions are designed to appeal in the first instance to those, who are or consider themselves landless peasants. Little thought seems to have been given, how subsistence farming on family plots of necessarily limited size can support an otherwise highly industrialised and modern economy; nor seem the compilers of the program have considered the necessary tensions arising between a modern urban proletariat dependend on a surplus of cheap food and a necessarily reactionary peasantry desiring to share in the wealth of a modernised state without being able to produce the food in the quantities necessary to exchange them for goods and services, and the consequent conservative brake on any political development within the country. Little consideration has also been given to the conflicts arising out

out of the dual role of the state as owner of the means of production on the one hand, where the state will act as a capitalist in competition with private capital, and will thus be forced to exploit its employees in order to make a profit, and the state as final arbiter in the wage claims of the workers; experience with the present state controlled industry in South Africa suggests that the State tends to favour itself as employer. Other problem areas would inevitably be the interference of centralist state controlled economy on the one hand and regionalist ("communalist") economy on the other hand.

While many Black Consciousness leaders have stated that they "would not like to exalt the past at the expense of the present", there is nevertheless a tendency to idealise the tribal past, a belief that "in the pre-Van Riebeeck days we had a high regard for people, their property and for life in general"; a hope to "reduce the hold of tech= nology over man and to reduce the materialistic element that is slowly creeping into the African Character". Kaunda's praise of the simple peasant in close relationship with nature is quoted by one leader of Black Consciousness in this context:

> Those people who are dependent upon and live in closest relationship with Nature are most conscious of the operation of these forces: the pulse of their lives beats in harmony with the pulse of the Universe; they may be simple and unlettered people and their hori= zons may be strictly limited, yet I believe that they inhabit a larger world than the sophisticated Westerner who has magnified his physical senses through invented gadgets at the price, all too often, of cutting out the dimension. of the spiritual.

One should not forget that the praise of the simple rural life has been the stock-in-trade of all those, who while they would not dream to give upt their Mercedes and their city mansion were dependent on the vote of the conservative peasant element; one should also not forget that Hitler, while professing to restore the German farmer to his God-given soil and while encouraging a 'Blut-und-Boden'mysticism, in fact assisted

in driving more peasants off the land than any other regime before.

It would be most unfair to most of the leaders and propagators of Black Consciousness as well as the masses supporting the movement to accuse them of faschism, racism or to draw too close a parallel between their movement and German National Socialism or Afrikaner Nationalism (which had its share of 'Socialism', even 'Communism' in the early days of the Rand Mine Strikes), a critical analysis of both the theory and praxis of the Black Consciousness ideology must of necessity bring out clearly those dangerous elements in this ideology, which under specific circumstances would be (and are) misused by demagogues trying to satisfy the masses with a nationalistic and racist solution to South African problems. The urgency of such a criticism is underlined by the way in which men like Buthelezi, Franklin Sonn and Professor van der Ross have utilised the 'gut-level' appeal of the Black Consciousness ideology throughout the black community. An analysis of the Black Consciousness ideology must show that there are good reasons why a specific group amongst the non-citizens, the state-employed middle class (magistrates, teachers, doctors etc) and those aspiring to it on the basis of their education formed the essential core of the leadership of the Black Consciousness movement, and why the small class of employers, entrepreneurs and some members of the traditionalistic, backward-looking group of chiefs supported (admittedly their own brand) of Black Consciousness. It will become clear that they want to supplant the ruling elite rather than to overthrow the entire system in South Africa; their dilemma is that a black power elite could only be established in South Africa, if the black masses could be motivated to take part in a struggle which would bring the masses very little reward in the end. In order to achieve this they were prepared to concede to the masses certain demands, just as Hitler's party included a strongly socialist platform. This maneuvre was possible and partly successful because of the absence of a strong and visible focus of mass political expression after the banning of the ANC, the PAC and the CPSA.

Despite the danger of serious misuse of the enthusiasm and the willingness of the masses to fight for their freedom and to destroy the apartheid state, it would be wrong to overlook the viable elements of Black Consciousness and to condemn this social movement as a whole. A statement put out by the pupils of Athlone High School by example contained elements of what would be targets for attack for any South African liberation movement; they condemned the state of injustice in South Africa; police brutality; the suppression of protest; inferior education; segregation laws; and the plight of detainees. Their condemnation of the apartheid state said:

> We wish the people to know that we are prepared to sacrifice everything, our carefully planned careers and aspirations, for the ensurance of a better and more just future.

When the actual confrontation started, the movement threw up leaders who could for some time no longer be controlled by the relatively minute 'black' middleclasses, which in their turn demanded of the collaborators of the apartheid system, be they members of the Urban Bantu Councils, be they the members of schoolboards or principals, be they homeland leaders like Buthelezi, to abandon all coopoeration with the system, and who, for the duration of the unrest succeeded at least partially to expose the seperate institutions as a farce and to force many of the collaborators to resign from these institutions. At the same time the movement, without giving up its main thrust against seperate education, took up some of the demands of the masses, realising that without the support of the masses it would necessarily fail not only in the short but also in the long run to make any impression against the military and organisational might of the South African State.

It is significant that while movements like Inkatha have appropriated some of the elements (especially the more reactionary ones) of Black Consciousness thought, the urban masses have largely rejected such overtures. While the organisation of the socalled 'backlash' in Soweto was never completely uncovered, it was widely felt within the townships that the whole backlash had been planned and orchestrated by the police,

the Urban Bantu Council, and that the Zulu Inkatha Cultural Movement had been the vehicle for the operation. When after two days of backlash Chief Buthelezi and Mr. Thula, head of the Inkatha movement, saw that their strategies had not confused the masses, and even Michael Mzobe, leader of the Dube hostel, made an impassioned plea to 'our brothers at Mzimhlope hostel' to stop fighting other blacks, Buthelezi went into Soweto and called of the fighting. The whole effort eventually backfired, when the hostels supported the strike of the 13th. 14th and 15th September 1976, one of the biggest ever strikes the country had seen When Buthtelezi and other collaborators tried to insinuate themselves to the masses as Black Consciousness leaders at the funeral of Steve Biko, the anger of the crowd was a clear indication that at least the urban masses had not been deceived by this strategy. It is also significant that some of the leaders of the ~~Soweto~~ Soweto unrest in exile have found their way to the traditional liberation movements.

The positive moments of Black Consciousness are to be found, however, precisely when the experience of the ideologues of Black Consciousness as members of an oppressed group forces them to reflect on the relationship between poverty and 'blackness'. Without fully grasping the exact mechanism underlying this relationship Steve Biko wrote:

> It will not be long before the Blacks relate their poverty to their blackness in concrete terms. Because of the tradition forced onto the country, the poor people shall always be Black people. It is not surprising, therefore, that the Blacks should wish to rid themselves of a system that locks up the wealth of the country in the hands of a few. No doubt Rick Turner was thinking of this when he declared that 'any Black government is likely to be socialist'.

The main contribution of Black Consciousness ~~km~~ was undoubtedly that it stimulated the confidence, pride and assertiveness among large sections of the oppressed; even if a revolution in the consciousness of the masses alone is not sufficient to attain the goals of the oppressed,

it is a necessary prerequisite for such a movement. As Steve Biko put it:

> The philosophy of Black Consciousness, therefore, expresses group pride and the determination of the Blacks to rise and attain the the envisaged self. At the heart of this kind of thinking is the realisation by the Blacks that the most potent weapon in the hands of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed. Once the latter has been so effectifely manipulated and controlled by the oppressor as to make the oppressed believe that he is liability to the White man, then there will be nothing the oppressed can do that will really scare the powerful masters. Hence thinking along the lines of Black consciousness makes the Black man siee himself as a being, entire in himself, and not as an extension of a broom or additional leverage to some machine. At the end of it all he cannot tolerate attempts by anybody to dwarf the significance of his manhood. Once this happens, we shall know that the real man in the Black person is beginning to shine through.

The roots of Black Consciousness

It is commonly accepted that the Black Consciousness movement did not originate in South Africa, but was imported from the U.S.A., and that the University Christian Movement and the National Union of South African Students played a major part in the transmission of this ideology to the students of the ~~xxx~~ ethnic universities in the sixties. Note should, however, be taken of the contention of Steve Biko that Black Consciousness in South Africa was a sequel to the attainment of independence by so many African States within a short time; while this may have contributed to the mood, they ~~xx~~ certainly did not contribute the ideological structure and terminology, as Biko himself admits, while playing down the importance of the American terminology; but an ideological system is after all the coherence and structuring of thought by means of a terminology.

It will therefore become necessary to analyse the origins of Black Consciousness in the U.S.A., to see to what degree Black Consciousness was a valid attempt to solve problems there, what faults are inherent in it, and to what degree its application to the South African situation had a clarifying effect or otherwise.

A convenient starting point for this analysis seems to me the figure of Marcus Garvey and his "Universal Negro Improvement Association", founded after the First World War. Hundreds of thousands listened to Harvey's condemnation of white racism and his aggressive emphasis on blackness. Garvey developed a program of return to Africa, "that black Zion" and named himself Provisional President of Africa. Despite such bizarre elements in his pronouncements and actions, he did built up organisations for economic self-help, demanded black factories, businesses and banks, and founded a few such undertakings himself, amongst others the Black Star Line which was destined to transport negroes willing to return to Africa. Despite his big organisation he foundered in his attempt to establish a 'black capitalism'. Although he appealed to the poorest people in the ghettoes, he did not develop a revolutionary social concept, but continued believing that capitalism was necessary for the development of the world. Thus in practice he expressed the interests of the black middle class who were trying to develop a space free from the competition of the powerful 'white' capitalism. Sirilar concepts were developed by the "Fathers Divine", the "Movement for the 49th State", various Abyssinian sects, the "Moorish Temples", which were a direct forrunner of the "Black Muslims", led since 1934 by Elija Muhammed.

In the U.S.A. it was mainly the weak entrepreneurial class which opted from the beginning for some form of Black Consciousness, because it promised them a way to exploit their own people by directing the buying power of Blacks away from the powerful 'white' American industry and commerce to their own incipient industries and shops by "Negro Business" and "Buy Black" Slogans. Being starved of

capital and expensive know-how, Black could not hope to compete against multinational companies, advanced technology and supermarket chains; if they therefore could persuade other Blacks to buy in shops owned by Blacks and largely supplied by a Black industry, or even better, if a seperate Black State with import protection would allow Blacks to develop their own industry, they would have a captive market and would thus be able to accumulate the necessary capital for development. There is undoubtedly some rationality behind this argument. Steve Biko has taken it up:

> It goes without saying that the Black people of South Africa, in order to make the necessary strides in the new direction they are thinking of, have to take a long look at how they can use their economic power to their advantage. As the situation stands today, money from the Black world tends to take a uni-directional flow to the White society. Blacks buy from white supermarkets, White greengrocers, White bottle stores, White chemists, and, to crown it all, those who can, bank at White-owned banks. Needless to say, they travel to work in government owned trains or White-owned buses. If then we wish to make use of the little we have to improve our lot, it can only lead to greater awareness of the power we wield as a group. The 'Buy Black' campaign that is being waged in the Johannesburg area must not be scoffed at.

But even if the existing capitalists would completely withdraw from Black areas, and Blacks would buy in Black shops (even if the price were higher than in White-owned supermarket chains), even if the profit from such businesses would not eventually flow into white-owned banks, even if Blacks could eventually build up a Black capitalist niche for themselves within the apartheid state (or even in a liberated South Africa), the lot of the majority of the workers would not be altered by this exercise in any way; they would still be exploited: by Blacks instead of Whites. This is not to say that the oppressed

should not take a look at their economic power, so as to determine how they can use it in their struggle; but they will have to use their economic powers as producers rather than their economic power as consumers in that struggle, even if such institutions as consumers' cooperatives (rather than privately owned shops in the black areas) can play a definite role in the day to day struggle to balance the budget of a worker's family. (Even the co-operative can be used, however, as a front for private enterprise, as the establishment of small so-called co-operatives of the B.P.C. in the Western Cape showed, where with the aid of Anglo-American Corporation some to B.P.C. leaders were paid "director's" salaries.)

The groups which advocate "Negro business" and Buy Black" slogans are the groups which tend to steer the Black Consciouseness groups away from any struggle against exploitation, and it is this group - in the U.S.A. as in South Africa - which is most prone to the mystical and racist elements of this ideology. But whereas in America the members of the professions and the civil cervants (including teachers) pin their hopes on integration and civil rights, in South Africa these groups become attracted to the ideology of Black Consciousness, indeed were the first to pick it up. The reason forthis is, that while in America there is at least a legalistic framework to provide the means to press for an equal chance of 'black' citizens in schools, universities, the state service, the legal frame work of South Africa expressely denies any such rights to 'non-whites', and blocks any hope of even an token assimilation of the 'black' intelligentsia The introduction of Bantu Education has made it clear to anybody who still forstered the illusion that the way to an integrated South Africa was through the arduous path of educational uplifting of the oppressed was living in dream land. Dr. H.F. Verwoerd, then Minister of Native Affairs, speaking in the House of Assembly on the 17th September 1953, is reported in Hansard as having said that "Bantu Education" must be controlled in conformity with the policy of the

State and that education must train and teach people in accordance with their opportunities in life; in terms of the Government's ~~xxx~~ plan for South Africa, there was no place for the "Bantu" in the European community above the level of certain forms of labour. Mr. ~~x~~ W.A. Maree, the Minister who was subsequently placed in charge of Bantu Education, speaking in the House of Assembly on 17th June 1959 said amongst other things, that "Non-Whites" must not gain the fallacious impression that academic training would remove discrimination in South Affica. It is clear from these and similar statements that the hope by Blacks in this country for integration into a democratic structure and the institutions of this country through education will never happen. The consequent large-scale involvement of academics, students, teachers and pupils in the South African Black Consciousness Movement meant that the emphasis of the struggle was more on education, ideology and consciousness than on the development of a seperate black industrial and commercial sphere, although the Committee of Ten, in which top B.P.C. personnel were involved, demanded repeatedly that a business centre for Soweto business men be established.

While Garvey produced very little which has remained viable as a possible ideology of Blacks, during the same time, under the impression of the ~~xx~~ slowly decaying colonial system, William Du Bois attempted to internationalise the struggle of American Negroes and to relate it to the question of decolonisation of Africa. His formulation, "The problem of the 20th Century is the problem of the colour-line - the relation of the darker races to the lighter", was taken up by the Black Conscious ~~xxx~~ leader Barney Pityana. Implicit in this statement is the ~~x~~ rejection of the Marxian formulation that the overriding division in the capitalist world is the ~~xxxxxxxx~~ antagonism between capitalists and workers. It replaces the call, Workers of the World unite, which not only in South Africa had been altered to 'White Workers of the World unite' by the call 'Blacks unite';

The Black people must see themselves as a unit. They must realize

that they are on their own. Their destiny lies in their hands. No amount of intervention will give them salvation. (B. Pityana). In order to create this union of all Blacks in the world, Du Bois helped to organise a Pan-African conference in London in 1900, followed in 1919 by the first Pan-African congress. Du Bois was the main representative of that movement in the U.S.A. Pan-Africanism, like the Pan-Slavonic movement and the Pan-Germanic movement, was not a movement of the oppressed workers, but a 'nationalist' movement, if one can conceive of a nationalist movement which does not refer to an existing nation-state but to one still to be created. Like the Pan-Slavonic movement, which wanted to create a unified state for all the various Slavonic tribes scattered over Eastern Europe and at that time members of various nation-states, like the Pan-Germanic movement which wanted to unite the Germans of the various German States, Switserland and Austria, as well as those who were living under French, Dutch and Russian controll, Pan-Africanism attempted to instill into the Black masses in Africa and those in Exile in America the consciousness of a common destiny and eventually a common fatherland. As Pan-Africanism did not have a radical or revolutionary program to mobilise the masses, its selfconsciousness and strategy turned mainly to the 'Black' middleclass and intelligentsia. Instead of mobilising the revolutionary resistance of the African people it appealed morally to the colonial powers, and many delegates, because of their position in the colonial hierarchy, maintained better personal relations to their colonial oppressors than to the oppressed people of their own countries. After three congresses - in 1921 (London, Brussel, Paris); in 1923 (London and Lissabon); and in 1927 (New York) the movement went dormant until the new Pan-African Congress was called together in Manchester in 1945. This revived Pan-Africanist movement made itself felt eventually in the politics of the South African freedom movements, when the 'Africanists' in the A.N.C., during the election demonstrations of 1958 openly opposed the leadership of Albert Luthuli and his policy

of racial co-operation with 'Coloureds', 'Indians' and the 'white' Congress of Democrats. While seeing some of the logic of the Africanists, Luthuli at that time argued that the policy of uniting all resisters to white supremacy, regardless of race increased the impact of resistance and foreshadowed a future non-racialist South Africa. He believed that a radically exclusive resistance was the wrong reply to a radically exclusive oppression, that it was morally wrong. While he admitted that tactically the concentration of the forces of resistance may have some advantages, he warned of the effect in the long run, where it would obstruct the establishment of a broadly based new South African society. The establishment of the P.A.C. in that year, in any case, introduced a serious split in the South African liberation movement, at a time when the Nationalist government was preparing for the total destruction of the African opposition to its policy.

Nevertheless the Pan-Africanist movement - in Africa and America - contributed not only to the development of the ideology of Black Consciousness, but to the struggle in South Africa itself, particularly during and after the Sharpeville-shootings. Apart from its political contribution Pan-Africanism right from its inception has left its mark on the development of a 'Black' art. Westindian and African influences, a strong interest in primitive cultures in America and in Western Europe, the memories of a 'folk-culture' in the South of the U.S.A., and the alienation of the Negroes in the ghetto-suburbs of the North combined to bring about a 'Negro-Renaissance' (also called 'Harlem Renaissance' or 'New Negro'). 'White' Americans and Europeans soon assimilated this new culture, and even commercialised its 'emotionality' and 'primitiveness'. Stressing the 'primitiveness' of Negro and African art, European intellectuals bemoaned the destruction of 'primitive' art forms by progress, but in no way spelled out that this 'progress' was, seen from the Black point of view, nothing else but the exploitation and oppression of ~~the black~~ colonialism; the 'Negro-Renaissance' and similar movements, like the 'Negritude'-movement in the French-speaking colonies, thus allowed the European intellectual the illusion of

empathy with the struggle of the 'Blacks', without forcing him to spell out clearly his opposition to the colonial system, segregation or apartheid. In contrast to more recent developments, Black art initially was a stance directed in the first instance toward the White oppres- , , just as the Pan-Africanist movement started off as a plea to the colonialist and oppressor to be more humane; because this 'Black' art was produced largely for a 'White' market in America and Europe, only those works had any hope of being published, printed, sold or performed, which while being suitably Black, Negro, 'primitive', where nevertheless not radical in their analysis of the situation of the oppressed. Despite the danger of mere posturing before a 'White' audience, much of the art produced in these movements has become an invaluable addition to the 'Black' tradition and thus a contribution to the development of a positive cultural self-consciousness of the Negroes in America, the Blacks of French-speaking countries and finally to Africa as a whole. Poets and writers like Langston Hughes, Claude McKay, Countee Cullen, Sterling Brown, Jessie Fauset, Jean Toomer, and historians like Du Bois, Carter G. Woodson, Alein Locke, Arthur A. Schomburg, and J.A. Rogers tried to formulate this new 'Black' consciousness, which while it did include the right to resist 'White' power amongst its tenets, was not the revolutionary consciousness of a class, but the racial consciousness of a group of people suppressed by a racist ideology.

The Negro Renaissance as a cultural phenomenon ended with the world economic crisis of 1929; the well-to-do 'white' audience which had hitherto supported it and had revelled in the exotic aspects of the cultural black renaissance, suddenly was confronted by other more pressing problems; the money available for cultural activitées decreased considerably. In the bitter social and economic problems of the ghettoes of the thirties the blacks themselves turned away from the utopian movements of the twenties and engaged in more immediately relevant political and trade union struggle against hunger, unemployment and

discrimination, and for a society of freedom on the basis of material equality.

Despite some of the dubious elements in its ideology, the Pan-Africanist movement is important historically as a first focus for many of the national liberation movements of Africa. As early as 1903 John Dube e.g. founded the well-known Zulu newspaper Ilange Lase Natal, to serve as a mouthpiece of African viewpoints, and in 1912 he helped to establish the A.N.C. He was influenced by the foundation of the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People under Du Bois and by the ideas of Booker T. Washington, and in the pursuit of these ideas founded the Ohlange Institute for Adult Education. What did not find a following until much later was the cult of 'primitive' exoticism, understandably so in the South African context, as most of the intellectuals propagating some form of Pan-Africanism had just themselves escaped the 'primitive' conditions of the tribal homelands by way of their mostly Christian education, and had little sympathy with pagan rites and tribal life. But there were some voices like H.I.E. Dhlomo's poem, The Drums of Africa (1944), which very early expressed the nostalgia of the urbanised African for a tribal society undisturbed by colonial depredation; and the slogan Mayibuye Africa (May Africa return, i.e. as it was before colonialism) became the battle cry of the A.N.C. This myth of the once virgin Africa, to whom one must return, finds more and more prophets as urbanisation proceeds. In the confrontation between the industrialised metropolis and the mirage of the African past in tribal homelands, the elements of African culture very often disintegrate into fairytale like dream worlds, as in the "nostalgic torment" of Winston Nkondo's poem As I walk the streets of Joh'burg (1975). Not only does he make this past the fountain of magic rejuvenation - he leaves the city "the way of the hare" but returns "with the stride of a lion" - but a past which can always be reached by a "pilgrimage back home":

home of birds caged in freedom darkling-undergrowth
home of prayer of black soil with ever ears

home of ritual prayer of wet corned sacrificial
home of the song-hands kneed around the sacred tree
home of the berobed coloured graves
where spirits love, live and chastise

While after the colonial and missionary denigration of all things African as pagan and primitive, a more positive turn towards the cultural and social heritage of Africa is undoubtedly a necessity, an idealisation of this past can only lead any African liberation movement into indissoluble economic and social dilemmas. Steve Bikos concept that African culture has been 'arrested' by colonisation, and that what is necessary is not to go back to but to develop out of its own roots and bring upt to date what was valuable in African culture, is more realistic:

> Our culture must be defined in concrete terms. We must relate the past to the present and demonstrate an historical evolution of the modern African. We must reject the attempt by the powers that be to project an arrested image of our culture. They have deliberately arrested our culture at the tribal stage to perpetuate the myth that African people were near-cannibals, had no real ambitions in life, and were preoccupied with sex and drink. In fact the wide-spread vice often found in the African townships is a result of the interference of the White man in the natural evolution of the true native culture. 'Where colonisation is a fact, the indigenous culture begins to rot and among the ruins something begins to be born which is condemned to exist on the margin allowed it by the European culture.' It is through the evolution of our genuine culture that our identity can be fully rediscovered.

Such a concept while it still adheres to the somewhat doubtful entity 'African culture' (doubtful insofar as 'African cultures' can be shown to be of such irreducible variety and open to so many outside influences that it becomes questionable to talk about <u>one</u> African culture without

reference to time and place, and insofar as culture is not bound to continents but to nationstates on the one hand and to all mankind on the other) at least avoids some of the ambiguities and dangers of the "return to..." stance (to nature, to the way of our ancestors, to more primitive social frameworks etc.) which can be clearly demonstrated in an analysis of similar movements in the Europe of the 18th, 19th and 20th Century. The idealisation of 'primitive' man by Rousseau had a definite revolutionary bias, and was understood as such by both adherents and opponents of the French Revolution: his concept of the social contract, which destroyed man's primeval absolute freedom, forms the basis of the early bourgeois attack against feudalism and absolutism; not that the bourgeoisie of the 18th century hoped to return to such primitive conditions; but if man was born free and only delegated his powers to princes and kings in some mystical past, then he can dissolve this contract and take back all these powers and start anew. In the same way, the memory of a precolonial Africa serves to repudiate the myth that the 'Black' man was born to be slave and servant: he was free once, that freedom was taken from him by 'white power', and can thus be won back by 'black power'. But this concept is open to abuse: While some of the Romantics of the 18th and 19th century were Rousseauists in the revolutionary sense, many used the same type of argument for their reactionary purpose: they praised the Middle Ages, its political and social structure, as against the rational levelling of the human race on an egalitarian basis as advocated by the Enlightenment, as the truly harmonious society of the past to which we must return. Not only did they laud the 'organically grown' structures of feudalist dark ages and oppose the rationality, progress and enlightenment of the Age of Reason, in order to oppose the development of a democratic Europe, but they used this often mythical past to give the concept of the nation state a historical dimension. During the 19th century thus the mythology of the free, morally pure and forthright Teutonic tribes at the time of

Tacitus became the political legend first of the Second Reich, founded on the weapons of the victorious Prussians and then of the discontented petty-bourgeoisie of Germany. The dream of the past splendours of the Aryan race led directly to Hitler's racist concepts and indirectly reinforced similar concepts of Afrikaner nationalism.

While an uncritical adulation of Chaka's Prussian militarism could well become the ideological foundation of a militarist Zulu nationalism and a nationalist Zulu dictatorship, it would be unfair not to differentiate between the nationalism of the European bourgeoisie, the fashism of the 20th century European petty bourgeoisie and the various forms of African nationalism. But it would be wrong to deny, that there is no difference in the last instance between the 'normal' and 'positive' nationalism of the liberation movements fighting against foreign occupation, colonialism and economic exploitation and 'abnormal' and 'negative' forms of nationalism, such as naziism, faschism, and Afrikaner nationalism: although nationalism and faschism differ in virulence and violence, all forms of nationalism arise out of the same root cause and the transformation between a benign and a deadly form of nationalism depends merely on the kind of pressure the outside world brings to bear on a country. The root cause of nationalism is, as Tom Nairn has shown, the 'uneven development of history', or in other words, the development of capitalism in a few states of Western Europe and North America; the swamping of other countries by this new form of production threatened all backwards countries with becoming colonies of the great metropolitan countries, unless they could mobilise the masses of their own country against this threat. The first countries to feel this threat were Germany, Russia, Spain and Italy, overrun by the Napoleonic armies of France; being themselve backward and underdeveloped, they could hold their own only by appealing to the masses with nationalist slogans; but since these masses had very little incentive for defending their country in which they had no material stake, nationalism had to rely

irrational motives and Romantic notions. Nationalism x must always be a popular movement, a mass movement, and it therefore uses folk culture and folk tradition, a recourse to the 'good old times' before industrialisation, to mobilise the masses against the onlaught of a 'foreign' capitalism.

Nationalism is in fact the ideology in the first instance of the oppressed countries of the periphery, threatened to be taken over by the metropolitan countries of the centre (which in turn become nationalist if threatened by the rise of newer metropolitan powers). The ambiguity of nationalism lies in the fact that it has to mobilise the masses of a country against progress, because progress under capitalsist conditions invariably means domination; in other words, since the means of material production which ensure material progress are in the hand of private individuals concentrated in certain socalled 'developed' countries, the underdeveloped countries as a whole, including their ruling elite, are threatened by proletarianisation, impoverishment, active underdevelopment; since the profit extracted from all work done in a colony or a state with semicolonial status, flows into the metropolis, there is of necessity a romantic anti-capitalist note in all nationalism. But at the same time the national liberation can only be secured against continuing inroads of metropolitan colonialism, if the methods of capitalism are applied now not for the benefit of the metropolis but for the benefit of the indigenous elite. Out of the contradictions between the need to develop an 'indigenous' capitalism and to ward of 'foreign' capitalism, between the attempt to return to pre-capitalis forms of living and the impossibility of it, develop the 'irrationalities' of any nationalism, which lead, if only the pressures of the antagonistic contradictions become severe enough, to some kind of faschism, which is the only form to contain such contradictions. While it is clear that Black Nationalism at the moment hasnot yet reached this stage, its manipulation in that direction is a constant possibility.

Besides being an answer to an outside threat, nationalism always

also is an answer by the national bourgeoisie and the petty bourgeois classes against the threat of the revolutionary socialism of the labouring masses and an internationalist communist movement. While nationalist movements in general draw their main support from the petty bourgeois classes, threatened by international capitalism to loose its relatively privileged position and to drift down into the proletariat, and feeling threatened by the internationalist communist movement in their property, these movements do also attract the bourgeois classes who use it to further their colonialist strategy and their attempts to corner a larger share of the world market, and at least some of the working classes, who are disillusioned by the strategies of the socialist and communist parties, who do not seem to be able to bring about a material advance towards a socialist state. Since the petty bourgeois classes are a minority they cannot attain power without the material support of the bourgeoisie and the voter support of at least some of the working classes; even so they have to resort very often to methods which are 'illegal' within Western democracies (putch, civil war, manipulation of the election procedure). The faschist political platform thus invariably contains a mixture of mutually exclusive demands which are superficially harmonised in such a way that it appears as if the interest of the various classes whose support is sought are if not identical then at least not conflicting. These platforms typically contain statements of aggressive nationalism, imperialism and expansionist colonialism (these may be missing in a country where the national bourgeoisie is weak, or they may be veiled, where the rising national bourgeoisie cannot yet afford a war with surrounding countries); strong demands for the conservation of the interests of the petty bourgeoisie and the farmers against destruction of traditional forms of production and distribution by capitalism (in order not to offend the national bourgeoisie these are often phrased in such a way as to equate capitalism with foreign - Jewish, American, International capitalism); in order to bolster the sagging self-consious-

ness of the petty-bourgeoisie the platform usually contains racist and chauvinist statements about the superiority of the particular nation concerned; finally the typically faschist program contains some social promises for the masses, such as the reduction of unemployment, improvements in social security, and statements about the nobility of manual labour etc.

The case of the Afrikaner nationalism and Black nationalism is slightly different in that the addressee of that program is only one section of the population, which is,however, usually equated with the totality of the state: thus the Afrikaner nationalism with South African nationalism. It is because of this that Black Nationalism bears some resemblance to Afrikaner nationalism, particularily in its more rabid forms which threaten to drive the Whites into the sea. Both the Afrikaner, after the Anglo-Boer War and the 'black' non-citizens until the present day were completely excluded from the benefits of the capitalist economy of South Africa. In both cases we have a large group of dispossessed peasants and farmers drifting into the proletariate, led by a group of intellectuals (teachers, priests, administrators etc.) demanding a share of the capitalist economy for their 'nation'. In both cases the demands are not made for a class (the workers) but for a national, ethnic or racist entity (the Afrikanervolk, the 'blacks', or in the case of Inkatha, the Zulus). This explains some of the astonishing similarity of some of the pronouncements of the Afrikaner leaders of the thirties and Black Power leaders in the late sixties: like the ideologues of the Afrikaners, they are the intelligentsia and the petty bourgeois element excluded from the political and economical positions of power, and want to replace the present power elite. An example of such similarity is a memorandum under the title Basic Principles, signed by M.C. Botha, then Honorary Secretary of the Afrikaanse Kultuurraad and the Pretoriase Onderwysraad, later Minister of Bantu Education and Bantu Administration, in which he calls for a general strike by pupils, students and teachers (dated

11-10-43) against the enforcement of dual medium instruction in white schools; just as the Afrikaner at that time protested vigorously against a partial instruction through the hated medium of English, so in 1976 Black teachers and students protested against the enforced instruction of part of their syllabus through the hated medium of Afrikaans. Jimmy Krüger (in an interview with the BBC) therefore had no objections to Black Nationalism, which would forster pride in being black, would make them go back to their own culture; the only objection he had to the Black Consciousness Movement and Black Power was, that they were too 'extreme' and 'racist', i.e. militantly anti-White.

"Black Power"

In 1966 Stokeley Carmichael mobilised his coloured audience on a civil rights march through Mississippi with the rallying cry of 'Black Power'; it highlighted the strains within the civil rights movement, and showed that 'Blacks ' were no longer prepared to work under the tutelage of 'Whites', that they were prepared to strike out on their own, and that they rejected what they regarded as the ineffective tactics of white and black liberals. In 1968/69 'Black' students, previously members of the 'white' liberal students organisation NUSAS, broke away from that organisation and formed their own, SASO, after the first signs of strain had made themselves felt on the NUSAS-congress of 1967 in Grahamstown. It is highly debatable whether the parallelism of the two events is merely coincidental; undoubtedly there existed a long tradition of Afrikanism, Pan-Africanism and Black Nationalism in South Africa itself, but the specific form which Black Consciousness asumed shows clearly that it took its cues from the black power movement in the U.S.A., but also that it adopted it to the South African circum= stances, where the 'Blacks' were in a majority, and where they had not been brought as slaves but demanded their rights as the original in=

habitants of the country. While e.g. the right to armed resistance against a racist and injust system featured in the ideology on both sides of the Atlantic, such demands as for the autonomy of a Black state within the U.S.A. were modified to become the demand for a 'Black' South Africa. While equally the movement of "Black Muslim" or the "Nation of Islam" did not make much inroads into the South African scene, some of its puritanism has coloured the attack of the South African movement against the alcoholism prevalent and even forstered byt the South African government under the 'Black' population. But the Black Muslim Movement created one political leader who later - when he had left the movement - became next to Stokeley Carmichael and Eldrigge Cleaver one of the most important leaders of the movement: Malcolm X. The most important elements of his program for a 'revolutionary Black nationalism' were: 1. the demand for a armed Black liberation struggle in America and the acceptance of revolutionary violence; 2. the extension of the struggle from civil rights to human rights; 3. the self-consciousness of Black America as part of the international liberation struggle of the 'Third World'; 4. The rejection of the racism of the 'Black Muslims'; 5. the insight that oppression and emancipation were not bound to skin colour and that white revolutionaries could be allies in the struggle; 6. a more pragmatic policy as far as 'Black autonomy'was concerned: instead of the Utopian Negro state he demanded Black control over the Black ghettoes. The contradictions in his program are apparent: as Black revolutionary he regarded Black society as classless, and while he accepted white revolutionaries as allies he did not exclude Black businessmen as potential opponents of the Black masses from the movement. It is understandable that after a hundred years of white treason in the class struggle in America he no longer saw solidarity with the white worker as realistic possibility; but he did not see that the problems of the ghetto could not be solved in isolation and that his struggle would either end in the establish-

ment of a Black elite in the suburbs who controlled these suburbs with the tacit approval of the white elite or would necessaruly end in the revolutionary change of the society as a whole. Similar attempt by the Comittee of Ten to bring Soweto under effective Black control (instead of the puppet control by Urban Bantu Councils) as partial solutions within a country which otherwise remains in the grip of apartheid would be doomed to the same fate.

It must be remembered that while it is easier to organise resistance in the ghettoes where 'Blacks' are amongst themselves control over the ghetto will in no way hinder control over most of the Blacks' life outside the ghetto: his life as a worker, his subjection to all the laws of apartheid during most of his waking life, would not cease, even if Soweto would become Bantustan-like or even truly autonomous entities. But at the work place 'Blacks' are not among themselves; they are confronted with white workers who have a privileged position within the capitalist system because of apartheid and who, while being exploited, do not share the same conditions with their 'Black colleagues. It is therefore extremely difficult for the Black worker to see the White worker as a worker, exploited like himself, victim of a system, whose predondition is the power of capital over the worker. It is therefore understandable why the struggle of Black Power was directed over the control of the ghettoes, why it organised, demonstrated and fought within the ghetto, not at the place of work, and that the efforts of organised 'Black' trade unions in South Africa in the early seventies and the efforts of the various Black Consciousness movements between 1976 and 1978 had so few points of coincidence, and that the strikes in Natal and Namibia did not coincide with the unrest in the Black ghettoes.

The form of the struggle of the Black Power movements was thus typically the 'unrest' in the ghetto, rarely spilling over into the white city centres, rarely involving the workers. In America e.g. there were a series of spontaneous rebellions in the ghettoes between

1964 and 1969, culminating in riots in over 120 American towns after the murder of Martin Luther King, finally crushed by the overpowering apparatus of oppression mustered by the state; at the same time the spontaneous rebellion was given up as a form of political protest in favour of other more coordinated forms of political resistance. Similar ghetto-rebellions in South Africa were crushed even more ruthlessly by the South African government.

While they were talking about armed resistance, the Black Power movements have not been able to oppose the organised terror of police and army, with anything on the same scale. Both in America and South Africa very few 'Whites' have been killed, as opposed to thousands of Blacks. Here and in America the 'violence' of the 'Blacks' was nearly exclusively directed against objects, mostly symbols of the hated 'white rule' such as offices of the state, the state-owned beer-halls, schools, libraries, buses etc. In America plundering of white shop-owners featured more prominently than in South Africa, where the main shopping centres are outside the ghettoes. The defeat of the unarmed rebellions in America was followed by calls from Black Power leaders that Blacks should arm themselves, and armed resistance groups were organised on a local level; the underground groups tried to organise and coordinate the resistance on a national level; how far this has succeeded is difficult to say so far; but it is significant that this phase was using solgans not of class struggle but of the national liberation movements of Africa. The South African situation after the banning of all Black Consciousness Movements in 1977 is even more difficult to analyse, but it seems that a large portion of the rebels have left the country and joined the existing liberation movements, the A.N.C. and the P.A.C.

South African Black Consciousness Movements

Undoubtedly the first and most important Black Consciousness movement in South Africa was SASO; and far beyond this movement the generally

acknowledged leader was Stephen Biko. It is significant both for the style of Stephen Biko and for the nearly unbridgeable communications= gap between 'white' and 'black' South Africa that most white South Africans heard about Biko for the first time after his murder by the police in detention, and were shocked and surprised to discover that this 'black' student leader commanded the attention of all the world's news media. He was in fact the founder of and the main in= spiring force behind the Black Consciousness movement which addressed itself first to these Blacks then educated in the 'seperate' institution of 'Bantu Education', the racially segregated Universities and schools, to prepare it for a new phase of the struggle for freedom. At first the tactics of the various Black Consciousness movements reminded one of the tactics of the banned P.A.C., with which Black Consciousness has indeed a number of ideological similarities. Just as Robert Sobukwe had broken from the A.N.C. over the growing influence of whites and communists over the policies of that organisation, a trend which he saw as diluting the essentially black nature of the struggle.

While the rejection of such 'white' liberal institutions as NUSAS was traumatic, some of the 'white' leaders understood that the necessary radicalisation of the black struggle could not take place in largely white-oriented organisations, and that an organisation like NUSAS was unable to represent adequately the views of Black students. The main difficulty was that 'white students' could not count on a large section of the voters to back up any radical demands, that radical support even in the socalled open universities was low, and that therefore there was a constant gap between the radical rhethoric of NUSAS and its virtual inability to bring about change. In contrast SASO adherents felt, that they not only represented black students but all black people; because of their identification with all blacks they hoped (and events have proved them at least partially right) that they could organise blac resistance, once freed of the burden of a vacillating and isolated body like NUSAS.

The other major breeding ground of the Black Consciousness ideology in South Africa were the churches where black ministers expressed more and more concern over the contradictions between the liberal statements of (mainly white-run) churches and their segregated and racialist practice. The University Christian Movement, the Christian Institute with its Spro-Cas program leading towards a Black Communities Program, and the South African Council of Churches afforded opportunities for the development of a 'Black Theology'. Theologians like Dr. Allan Boesak saw to it that the Synod of the N.G. Sendingskerk discussed the apartheidssystem, the Broederbond, the terrorism laws, Crossroads, and roundly denounced government policy from this forum.

Next to SASO the two most important Black Consciousness organisations were no doubt the Black People's Convention and the South African Students Movement. The Black People's Convention tried to function as a political party for blacks in the absence of the banned liberation movements A.N.C. and P.A.C. Through its external secretariat in Botswana it hoped to make contact not only with all the major capitals of the world but also with the liberation movements in exile. Its president was Mxx Kenneth Rachidi, its honorary life president Mxx Stephen Biko. Motions at its last congress in February 1977 and at a common meeting with SASO in May 1977 called for the development of black art and culture, welcomed the collapse of the Soweto Urban Bantu Council and condemned multiracial concessions in the field of sport on the grounds that sport would continue to be abnormal until all South Africans had equal economic and political rights. Very interestingly at the meeting with SASO a motion was adopted condemning the activities of the Urban Foundation for sabotaging the interests of Blacks in S.A. by creating a black middle class; this resolution shows clearly that shortly before its banning both organisations were becoming aware of some of the contradictions of black consciousness economic policy (which has been analysed previously in this paper).

Most immediately involved in the unrests of 1976 and 1977 was undoubtedly SASM, the South African Students Movement, which operated mostly within the schools, black high school pupils forming the predominant membership. While members of this movement have shown an incrddible courage under the onslaught of South Africas organised police force and special sections of the army, and while the student leadership thrown up by this movement has clearly shown strong leadership potential under very difficult circumstances, the congresses of this movement have also fully taken part in the formulation of policy for the Black liberation struggle. The 1977 general meeting by example passed such resolutions as: all government created bodies should be rejected; workers should participate fully in in the liberation of the country; wages should be determined by ability; foreign investment should be condemnedd as it aided apartheid; professional people should serve their own community; and religions should be made more indigenous and promote the black struggle. While some of these demands - like the concern with a black religion-are clearly marginal to main concern of the masses, and fit clearly into the concern of a black educated middle class; while others like the demand for wages according to ability merely echo the bourgeois liberal demands for equal opportunity and wages; the main thrust to involve the labouring masses in the struggle for liberation shows a growing awareness that the liberation struggle is not to be fought on issues concerning the students alone.

The Black Consciousness movement spawned a host of other organisations with more limited goals, such as the Black Parents Association under the charimanship of Dr. Manas Buthelezi, which played a role in educationa l and community affairs in Soweto and elsewhere, and which gave aid to the families of detainees and victims of the Soweto unrest. Other Black Consciousness organisations dealt more specifically with Black culture, such as the Union of Black Journalists (UBJ), the African Social Educational and Cultural Association (ASSECA), the South African Teachers Association, or with Black religion and theology, like the Interdenominational African

Ministers' Association, add the Black Priests' solidarity group. Directed to specific age groups and sections were also the Black Women's Federation (Congress) and the various Youth Organisations grouped loosely around a National Youth Organisation.

Most of the Black Consciousness Organisations were banned, and many of their leaders either banned or detained on the 19th October 1977. Since then the Black Consciousness movements have gone underground and it isdifficult to ascertain anything about their further development. Bu. as these organisations in the last few months of their existence seemed to be moving towards a closer cooperation with the banned and exiled liberation movements, the A.N.C. and the P.A.C., it seems reasonable to assume that the banning of the Black Consciousness movements and the large scale flight of many of the office bearers and members into exile before and after the bannings might have brought them ever closer together.

Not being Black Consciousness Movements in the proper sense, and outspokenly hostile to the Black Peoples' Convention and its alleid organistions, but nevertheless riding on the crest of Black Consciousness and finally profiting to some degree by the banning of the Black Consciousness movements were organisations like Inkatha Yenkululeko Yesizwe, the National Cultural Liberation Movement, based in KwaZulu, with Chief Gatsha Buthelezi as its president, and the Black Unity Front, opposed to homeland independence.

Black Consciousness in South Africa: a reactionary tendency?

In this paper I have at various points shown certain analogies between the Black Conscious ideology and the ideology of National Liberation Movements on the one hand, and the ideology of Nationalism, Faschism and National Socialism on the other hand. I have tried to point out the essentially petty bourgeois nature of Black Consciousness, while at the same time attempting to uncover some of the more radical practices of the Black Consciousness Movment, particularly in the South African Context. The question therefore arise, how the Black Consciousness movement

should be assessed and evaluated, both as to its historical rola and its significance for the future struggle for a liberated South AFrica. Perhaps the most significant failure of the Black Consciousness movements in South Africa was their fgailure to concentrate on issues which concerned the vast masses of South Africn workers, and thus to involve them in the struggle either to late or not on issues which were of a high priority for them.. This in the light of widespread strikes in the country in the severnties, particularly the Durban strikes of 1973,, and in view of the extremely high unemployment figures (said to have been more than 2 million) shows a serious communications deficit between workers and students, which was not really overcome even by the student inspired strike actions, as these actions were not fought on the essentially economic demands of workers but on educational matters, somewhat remote from the immediate concern of the workers. On the other hand, the ~~X~~ Black Consciousness movement's own labour organisation failed to make much impact amongst black workers. Until they were banned, Black Consciousness movements dealt with the issue of exploitation relatively vaguely. They focussed primarily on political power, and a mere redistribution of political power to ~~the~~ black leaders does not hold out much hope for the most economically deprived: his fate is not much changed by becoming a voting exploited la= bourer. The defeat of the Black Consciousness movement by the terror of all the might of the apartheid state, brought about a clear change in attitude, witnessed by the issues taken up by the underground newspaper of the Black Consciousness movement, People's Voice of June 1978, where the emphasis was on the living conditions in the ghettoes and "homelands", the humiliating and terrible working conditions of the people, starvation wages, the working conditions of domestic 'slaves', and where students state that they mustlearn to take up issues which affect the oppressed worker, such as the housing crisis, the "squatter" camps, the cost of living (rent, food, transport etc.) and the lack of decent community facilitées (streets, lights, pavements, drainage, clinics, creches etc)

By its racial definition of oppression Black Consciousness placed emphasis on the skin colour of the oppressor, who in South Africa is mostly white, though not uniquely so, but not on the question of oppression and domination x itself. It is therefore not surprising to hear that the organisor and later the external representative of B.A.W.U., the Black consciousness trade union, is militantly anti-socialist and pro-American. I have previously pointed out the significance of choosing a term like Black rather than worker to designate the unity of the oppressed. But what are blacks? The fallacy of the concept of a black race as a biological concept has been shown so conclusively that I need not repeat the arguments here. The sociological view of race which confuses the fact of race prejudice - all that matters to them is that a group of people must believe that another given group constitutes a race - with the reality, is equally a fallacy; scientific categories can not be built on the "beliefs" of people. Neither are the Blacks of South Africa a class: although a large majority of them are workers, some are peasants, some are landless peasants forced into capitalist economy to earn a living, and a small minority are clearly bourgeois. It could conceivably be argued that Blacks are a nation engaged in a national liberation struggle. Much of what I have said up to here xdxx strongly suggests that this constitutes the dominant component of black consciousness at the moment. In contrast to the American Black consciousness movement South Africa is a colonialist settler community oppressing the indigenous population. But this raises questions as to the place of socalled 'Malays' and 'Indians' who are clearly part of the oppressed but not part of the indigenous population. The emphasis on the national aspect of the liberation struggle also posed the threat of a false de-colonisation in the sense of Fanon: in that it does not clearly enough portray the class content of the struggle it can harness the masses to bring to power a new ruling elite which takes over the institutions xxxxxx formerly controlled by the Whites xxxxx without making any substantial change in the living contions and distribution of privileges in an exploitative society.

Unclarity in the question of class, race and nationality also allowed the movement to be at least partially used to further the individual careerism of a small elite which soon became estranged from the masses, particularly where it became dependent on the funds of liberal and church institutions, which despite the clear rejection of white liberals continued to influence and to steer at least some of the Black Consciousness organisations: it is known that BPC funded at least some of its projects from contributions by Anglo-American, and that despite criticisms of the Committee of Ten and the Urban Foundation by SASO (cf. their Newsletter of July 1977) top BPC leaders were involved in this group. The extent of funds flowing into the various Black Consciousness organisations helped to build up a bureaucracy, which was no longer dependent on popular support. This same unclarity allowed the movement to be at least partially infiltrated by black middle class representatives, to furhter their often vastly different aims.

Starting off as a student movement in South Africa, Black Consciousness (as the name makes clear) placed the main stress not on the economic realities of the average black worker but on consciousness. Now black liberation movements in South Africa have at all times asserted the right of the oppressed to an equality of opportunity on the grounds of a common humanity; in this process they have always debunked the notion that the oppressed of this country are inherently inferior; they stressed that the people have a history of struggle and achievement of which any people can be proud, and they have fought the slave mentality, which is inculcated by the oppressor; and all South African liberation movements have always attacked and negated the Herrenvolk myth. There is, however, a danger that when other but psychological aspects are relegated to the background that a liberation movement can no longer give a clear guidance on the issues of day to day politics and long term strategy. This became clear when the leaders of Black Consciousness were forced into an open confrontation with the South African system: it took them long to under-

stand, that any struggle which does not involve the masses must be lost, and thus that whatever partial demands they were starting out from, such a struggle must ascertain the true needs of the masses and mobilise the masses on demands which mean something to them.

As the struggle con tinued, at least those sections of the leadership which remained dependent on member support, i.e. mainly SASO and SASM began to understand this and moved closer to the real grievances of the masses and attempted a new analysis of the South African situation, which finally forced them away from a "Black" "Consciousness" ideology which they found more and more an inadequate tool of analysis and closer to the ideology of the exiled liberation movements.

The academic custom of quoting from sources has become nearly impossible under South AFrican censorship laws. Most of the sources I would have liked to quote, are banned. I therefore refrained from quotation and citation. Those who know the literature will realise that the material here assembled draws on a wide range of sources, and I want to acknowledge my debt to all those who have previously written on this subject.

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